

'Soft Words, Hard Arguments' Will Be Missed

Kansan Louie Weiss Helped Lead Right to Work Movement For Decades

Louie Weiss, an unassuming small businessman in southern Kansas who became a leader of statewide and national Right to Work efforts, passed away July 3 at the age of 85.

Mr. Weiss served on the National Right to Work Committee's board of directors for decades.

He was deeply involved in the Committee's legislative victories, from defeat of Big Labor's 1965-66 scheme to wipe out all state Right to Work laws through repeal of Taft-Hartley Section 14(b) on up to the most recent battles.

He also served on the board of the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation from its inception in 1968 and, for many years, as president of Kansans for the Right to Work.

'You Always Seem Able to Ask the Crucial Question That Gets Us to the Nub'

Back in 1952, before either the National Committee or the Kansas group yet existed, Louie Weiss became a Right to Work leader.

At that time, he was running a unionized manufacturing company. United Auto Workers (UAW) union bosses called a strike whose bottom-line objective was compulsory union membership for the company's employees.

The company had offered substantial pay hikes, but UAW bigwigs told Mr. Weiss that unless they got forced

unionism, they'd strike.

Union negotiators also told Mr. Weiss they would trade away all wage increases and other employee benefits already agreed to if the company acquiesced to a forced-membership deal.

To increase the pressure on the company to cave in to forced unionism, union thugs began following and intimidating school-aged children of employees who defied UAW strike orders.

The company still refused to sell out its employees' freedom. And UAW kingpins finally gave up. But Mr. Weiss was shocked by what he had seen, and committed himself to preventing future attacks on employees' Right to Work in Kansas.

After first mobilizing support for Right to Work in the business community, Mr. Weiss secured funding for and founded Kansans for the Right to Work. He then hired Reed Larson, a young engineer for the Coleman Company who had just completed a year as state president of a respected civic organization, to run the new group.

After the Kansas law was adopted in 1958, Mr. Larson went on to lead the National Right to Work Committee from 1959 until 2003.

Mr. Larson recalled the following words he once wrote to his "lifelong friend and associate":

"Your wise counsel and encouragement through thick and thin have kept me going in more crises than you



Both his family and his fellow Right to Work activists treasured Louie Weiss's kindness and wisdom.

realize. . . . You always seem able to ask the crucial question that gets us to the nub of the issue and headed in the right direction."

As another lifelong friend, Les Arvin, eloquently put it in his tribute, Mr. Weiss "was a user of soft words and hard arguments."

'It Was Great Fun Growing Up as Papa's Daughter'

Although he enjoyed considerable success as a businessman and was intensely involved in Right to Work and other civic issues, Mr. Weiss devoted much of his time and energy to his family.

After his first wife Marge died in 1963, he somehow managed to raise five children by himself while growing his new business, Midland Industries.

Several years later, he became the loving stepfather of two more children when he met and married his second wife Jean.

Mr. Weiss's daughter Laurie focused on his honesty, kindness and good humor in her eulogy:

"It was great fun growing up as Papa's daughter.

"I feel like I am the luckiest girl in the world to have had him as a father. I know I speak for all seven of his children when I say that and that they feel lucky too."

NATIONAL RIGHT TO WORK NEWSLETTER

www.nrtwc.org

August 2005

Written and Distributed by:

National Right to Work Committee®
8001 Braddock Road
Springfield, Va. 22160
E-mail: Members@NRTW.org

Mark Mix President
Reed Larson Exec. Cmte. Chairman
Stephen Goodrick Vice President
Matthew Leen Vice President
Doug Stafford Vice President
Stanley Greer Newsletter Editor

Editorial Comments only: stg@nrtwc.org

Contact the Membership Department by phoning 1-800-325-RTWC (7892) or (703) 321-9820, or faxing (703) 321-7143, if you wish to:

- **Report address changes or corrections**
- **Receive the NEWSLETTER or request, renew, or cancel Committee membership**
- **Obtain more information**

Because of NRTWC's tax-exempt status under IRC Sec. 501 (C)(4) and its state and federal legislative activities, contributions are not tax deductible as charitable contributions (IRC § 170) or as business deductions (IRC § 162(e)(1)).

© 2005 by the National Right to Work Committee®. Permission to reprint individual articles granted. Credit requested.